

August 2011

(Amended, August 2012)

DCPS Local Wellness Policy

Obesity is a serious health issue in the District of Columbia (DC) and across the country. According to the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 25.1% of women and 18.9% of men in the District are obese. Specifically with youth, the 2010 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System found that 32.5% of high school students are obese (14.5%) or overweight (18%). The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) can contribute to the District's prevention efforts to reduce childhood obesity by: (1) promoting health education and healthy behaviors; (2) offering healthy food to students; and (3) increasing physical activity of students before, during and after the school day. The DCPS Local Wellness Policy (LWP) articulates how we plan to implement nutrition and physical activity programming towards these three stated goals.

Local Wellness Policy Background

Through the 2004 Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act, U.S. Congress established a requirement that **all school districts with a federally funded school meal program develop and implement a local school wellness policy**. This legislation was reauthorized through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The federal law requires that LWPs must, at a minimum: (1) include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness; (2) establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity; (3) require that local education agencies (LEAs) involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, school staff and administrators and the public, in the development, implementation and review of the school wellness policy; (4) require that LEAs inform and update parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, school staff and administrators and the public about the content and implementation of the local school wellness policy; and (5) require that LEAs periodically measure the implementation of the LWP, make the assessment available to the public, and designate one or more people to oversee implementation and ensure that each school complies with the LWP.

Also in 2010, DC enacted the Healthy Schools Act (HSA), placing additional requirements on the LWPs adopted by DCPS and public charter schools. The HSA states that LWPs should include goals for improving the environmental sustainability of schools, increasing usage of locally grown, locally processed and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agricultural practices, and increasing physical activity. LWPs are to be revised once every three years. A copy shall be posted on each school's website if it has one, distributed to food service staff members, distributed to the school's parent/teacher organization if it has one, and made available in each school's office.

A checklist of federal and local LWP requirements for schools can be found on the next page, followed by the body of the DCPS LWP.

Contact us:

DCPS Office of Youth Engagement, Health and Wellness Team, 202-442-5065

DCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services, 202-576-5007 or food.dcps@dc.gov

DCPS Health and Physical Education Curriculum, 202-442-9439

Local Wellness Policy Checklist

Here's what your school **must** complete in order to be in compliance with Federal law and the DC Healthy Schools Act.

- ☐ Post the LWP on your school's **website** (if you have one)
- ☐ Post the LWP in your school's **front office**
- ☐ Distribute the LWP to **food service** staff
- ☐ Distribute the LWP to your school's **parent/teacher organization** (if you have one)
- ☐ Ensure your K-5 students receive at least **30 minutes of physical education** each week, and your grades 6-8 students receive **45 minutes of physical education** per week (p. 3)
- ☐ Ensure your students (K-8) receive at least **15 minutes of health education** per week (p. 3)
- ☐ Ensure your students have at least **20 minutes of recess** per day, and that recess is not withheld from your students as punishment (p. 4)
- ☐ Ensure your students have a minimum to **30 minutes to eat lunch after the last student passes through the line** every day, and that meals are not withheld as punishment (p. 4)
- ☐ Ensure your school continues to implement the free **breakfast** program (p. 4-5)
- ☐ Work with your school's food vendor to ensure all **school meals** meet the **serving requirements and nutritional guidelines** laid out in the LWP (p. 5)
- ☐ Ensure your school's **vending machines** only sell food that meet our nutrition guidelines (p. 6)

Section 1: Ensuring Quality Health Education, Nutrition Education, Physical Education, and Opportunities for Physical Activity

Health Education

At every grade level, DCPS ensures that students receive a sequential, comprehensive, and standards-based health education program. DCPS's program is taught by qualified and certified personnel, is based on the needs of students, and is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. For grades K-8, Health Education must be offered at least 15 minutes per week, or the same amount of time it was offered in school year 2009-2010, whichever is greater. DCPS expects schools to provide the same amount to Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten students. At the high school level, health education will be required for 0.5 credits. All health and PE teachers should be fully certified to teach.

Before inviting a community partner in to assist with health education, schools will coordinate with DCPS's Office of Youth Engagement (OYE) and ensure the community partner's curriculum aligns with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) Health Education Standards.

The HSA requires that by SY 2014-2015, for grades K-8, Health Education must be offered at least 75 minutes per week.

Nutrition Education

One component of a comprehensive health education program is nutrition education. Schools will provide nutrition education that:

- is part of the health education course;
- is accessible to all students;
- is integrated into other content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects (resources will be disseminated to teachers and other staff);
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with DCPS's curriculum, school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services and education programs;
- incorporates wellness nights into school programming;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers, parents and community partners.

Physical Education

Physical education is an important part of the DCPS curriculum at every grade level. This program includes team, individual and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as dance, yoga or the martial arts.

Schools will provide Physical Education that is:

- required for K-5 students, at least 30 minutes per week, or the same amount of time it was offered in school year 2009-2010, whichever is greater, and DCPS expects schools to provide the same amount to Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten students;
- required for grades 6-8 students, at least 45 minutes per week, or the same amount of time it was offered in school year 2009-2010 (whichever is greater);
- required for high school students for two semesters as required as part of the Carnegie Unit for graduation; and
- recognized as part of the academic program and is therefore a “right” not a “privilege,” for which should not be withheld from students;

Physical Education teachers will continue to implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition, and health.

- DCPS will continue to enhance the quality of physical education curricula and increase training of physical education teachers through site-based and mandatory, district-wide staff development.
- All health and PE teachers should be fully certified to teach health and physical education.
- An appropriate alternative activity to physical education shall be provided for students with a physical disability that restricts excessive physical exertion.
- Dedicated spaces should be provided for physical education.
- Physical Education staff, in collaboration with the school administration, will appropriately limit the amount or type of physical exercise required of students during air pollution episodes and inclement weather conditions.
- Physical Education will be integrated into other content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects (such as outdoor education). Resources will be disseminated to teachers and other staff.
- Student fitness levels will continue to be assessed through the use of the FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment tool for grades 4 and above.

The HSA requires that by SY 2014-2015, for grades K-5, Physical Education must be offered at least 150 minutes per week, and for grades 6-8, Physical Education must be offered at least 225 minutes per week.

Physical Activity

Schools offer students opportunities for physical activity through a range of before, during, and after-school programs. These include, but are not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, physical activity clubs, recess, and classroom-based physical activities. These contribute to the goal of 60 minutes per day of physical activity.

Schools should ensure that:

- recess time occurs daily, for at least 20 minutes;
- recess provides students with discretionary time to engage in physical activity that helps them develop healthy bodies and enjoyment of movement;
- mandatory physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or the withholding of physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) will not be used as punishment;

- classroom teachers incorporate physical activity breaks into the academic schedule each day, such as *Brainbreaks*, *Jammin' Minutes*, *Energizers*, and *Take 10*;
- students are encouraged to walk and bike to school; and
- pedestrian safety is incorporated into the 2nd grade Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Another opportunity for students to be physically active is through participation in athletics. DCPS encourages student participation and helps student-athletes develop according to their individual interests and abilities. Athletics offerings can be found on the DCPS website: www.dcps.dc.gov.

Section 2: Establishing Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Served and Sold on Campus During the School Day

Access to healthy foods is an important factor leading to academic success. DCPS strives to provide nutritious meals and snacks to our students before, during, and after school through a comprehensive school meal program.

Schools are required to increase participation in the meal programs through development of a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan that may include flyers, home mailings, or website advertisements. This should include efforts to reach beyond the local school community, including encouraging greater community coalitions. This also may include creating after-school cooking clubs for families, more parent workshops, community/school gardens, and providing wellness resources to families.

Free Lunch

DCPS will ensure that all eligible students will be offered free lunches that are appealing and attractive to children and served in a clean and pleasant setting. DCPS will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. Towards this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as breakfast in the classroom or a “grab and go” model.

Breakfast

Schools will continue to operate a universal “Free for All” School Breakfast Program. Schools with 40% or more of their students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals must operate alternative breakfast unless their full-service cafeteria participation rate is 75% or higher. Additionally, schools will place “grab and go” breakfast kiosks in a high traffic area outside of the cafeteria. Elementary schools that meet this qualification are required to serve Breakfast in the Classroom in every classroom in all grades. Eligible middle schools and high schools are required to serve either Breakfast in the Classroom or breakfast via a “grab and go” model to all students in all grades. Middle schools and high schools may serve another alternate serving model for breakfast with approval from DCPS’s Office of Food and Nutrition Services.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- Schools will provide a minimum of 30 minutes to eat lunch after the last student passes through the line.
- Students will have sufficient time to eat breakfast.
- Elementary schools will schedule lunch after recess periods, whenever possible.

Nutritional Quality of School Meals

School lunches will meet the serving requirements of the USDA's Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge Gold Award Level for fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

- In addition, school meals will meet the following requirements, as required by the USDA through participation in the National School Lunch Program:
 - Fats: school meals will limit saturated fat to fewer than 10% of total calories and 0 g of trans fats.
 - Sodium: gradual reductions in sodium until reaching the following levels by 2020:
 - Breakfast:
 - K-5 = < 430 mg
 - 6-8 = < 470 mg
 - 9-12 = < 500 mg
 - Lunch:
 - K-5 = < 640 mg
 - 6-8 = < 710 mg
 - 9-12 = < 740 mg
 - All school meals will provide only non-flavored reduced fat (1%) or fat-free (1%) milk.
 - No school meals will contain high fructose corn syrup.
 - All cereals will have 6 grams or less per serving of sugar.
- Schools will gain input from students, faculty and parents to come up with nutritious and appealing meals. This may include focus groups, taste tests, comment boxes, surveys, a student nutrition advisory council, or other means.
- Schools will offer a vegetarian option every day. Schools will post menus, ingredients, and food origins information in school offices and on school websites to help students and families learn more about the breakfast and lunch options at school.
- School meals will include fresh, locally-grown foods in school meals from farms engaged in sustainable practices whenever possible.
- School meals should include primarily whole, minimally-processed foods whenever possible;
- Schools should limit students' ability to leave campus to obtain fast food for lunch or other meals.
- Schools should encourage more student interaction with the food preparation process, including farm visits, cooking demonstrations and taste tests.
- School staff should be encouraged to model healthy eating habits for the students. School staff are strongly encouraged to not consume foods in front of students that do not meet the Healthier U.S. School Challenge at the Gold Award for Competitive Foods.

After School Snacks and Suppers

After-school snacks and suppers, when offered, will contribute to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Schools serving after-schools snacks will comply with the requirements of the National School Lunch Program. Suppers in at-risk areas will comply with the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, in addition to the requirements set forth in the LWP for school lunches.

D.C. Free Summer Meals Program

DCPS will sponsor the D.C. Free Summer Meals Program operated by OSSE for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation for DCPS and any interested community-based organization. Free summer meals will uphold the same nutrition and food quality standards as school meals, as required in the Healthy Schools Act and in this LWP.

Competitive Food Guidelines

DCPS strives to eliminate students' access to unhealthy foods on school grounds, including competitive foods. Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages available or sold outside of the federally-reimbursable, child nutrition programs. They are available in vending machines, a la carte lines, snack bars, and other places in the school. They also include foods and beverages used for school fundraisers and student rewards.

- Elementary Schools will not have snack or drink vending machines or school stores accessible by students.
- All beverages and snacks for sale in vending machines at the middle or high school level, a la carte lines, snack bars, school stores, fundraisers, and student awards must meet the Healthier U.S. School Challenge at the Gold Award Level for Competitive Foods. The requirements are as follows:
 - Portion Size: equal to or smaller than items served in the school lunch program; or in packages of 200 calories or less
 - Fat:
 - 35% or less of calories from total fat (excludes nuts and reduced-fat cheese)
 - Trans-fat free
 - 10% or less of calories from saturated fat (excludes reduced-fat cheese)
 - Sugar: 35% or less sugar by weight (excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk)
 - Sodium:
 - 480 mg or less per side dish
 - 600 mg or less per entrée
 - Beverages: limited to low fat or skim milk, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, or water
- DCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) will provide ideas for healthy fundraising ideas via the DCPS website.
- Schools will only market and promote foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards described above, and schools will encourage teachers and families to not bring soda and other beverages high in sugar content on school grounds, including in student lunches from home.
- Schools will prohibit third parties other than school related organizations and school meal service providers from selling food or beverages of any type to students on school property from 90 minutes before the school day begins until 90 minutes after the school day ends.

- Schools will not use food and beverages that do not meet the USDA's Healthier U.S. School Challenge for Competitive Foods in classroom celebrations, and will not advertise or market those in schools. Schools will not use or withhold any food or beverage as reward or punishment.
- Schools will limit celebrations that involve food or beverages during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. DCPS will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.
- The requirements of this section do not apply to food and drinks provided at no cost by parents of students in grades 6-12 or at official after school events or adult education programs.

Section 3: Increasing Environmental Sustainability of Schools

DCPS intends to transition to utilizing sustainable products in meal service so long as products are in alignment with school-wide waste disposal systems and are not cost-prohibitive. OFNS will transition to utilize reusable products in schools with commercial dishwashing capabilities. As of 2010, all schools undergoing modernization are being equipped with commercial dishwashers as per OFNS's specifications.

Additionally, DCPS will use regionally and sustainably grown foods whenever possible, and include education with students and families as a part of this process. There will be a public disclosure of where the food is grown and the promotion of local and sustainable foods. DCPS will work with OPEFM to communicate and encourage participation in any and all District-wide recycling or composting programs. Schools are encouraged to develop an environmental literacy plan for their schools. If funding is available, new DCPS school buildings will be LEED Gold certified, and all school buildings will use sustainable products in their cafeteria operations.

DCPS will support all school gardens and other school-based agricultural activities and will support schools looking to incorporate school garden produce into their school meals. DCPS will incorporate farm to school/food origin education into its standard curriculum.

DCPS will perpetuate successful models of school-based sustainability initiatives and share best practices, while using sustainable changes as a learning tool for students. DCPS will also encourage schools to measure their building's utility usage and to work towards decreasing it.

Section 4: Community Engagement

Community Involvement

In the spring and summer of 2011, DCPS convened a committee of school staff, parents, community members and local experts to garner their feedback on the current Local Wellness Policy and recommendations for the LWP's revision. Student feedback was also gathered through the OSSE's Youth Advisory Council. The committee reviewed and recommended revisions to the 2006 LWP to include community feedback and incorporate federal and local statutory requirements.

Keeping the Community Informed

DCPS will post the revised LWP on the DCPS website and promote the LWP with families. DCPS also will actively recruit stakeholders and community members to participate in any subsequent revision to the LWP.

Schools will keep their school community informed about the LWP by posting it in their front office, displaying it on their school's website, and sharing it with their food service staff and parent-teacher organization. Schools will also use parent resource centers to disseminate information about the LWP whenever possible. In addition, principals will actively engage parents in discussions about the LWP whenever possible in an effort to further promote the LWP, receive feedback, and encourage conversations about healthy behavior.

Additionally, DCPS should include and collaborate with other DC agencies and community organizations to coordinate development, distribution and promotion of the LWP. DCPS should also coordinate with community organizations to develop standardized language and communication materials about the requirements and benefits of the LWP. These materials should be targeted for specific audiences (staff, parents, students, community members).

DCPS will encourage schools to designate a point person in their school who may answer questions on the LWP. DCPS should also create guidance on how to implement a wellness committee (consisting of staff, students, parents, community members) in schools to support the implementation of this plan, and distribute this guidance in various ways. Communication should be simple, clear, and direct.

Section 5: Establish a Plan for Measuring the Impact and Implementation of the Local Wellness Policy

DCPS will monitor implementation and evaluation of the LWP. DCPS's Office of Youth Engagement and Office of Food and Nutrition Services will annually review the LWP, and will update the LWP every three years. This process will include engagement of students, families and school staff to measure success.

DCPS will evaluate the LWP using existing data collection tools, such as, but not limited to:

- FITNESSGRAM data collection and analysis
- OSSE Health and Physical Education student assessments
- Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) food focus groups and its Food Services Advisory Committee
 - OFNS will encourage students at every grade level to participate so as to have a representative sample.
- Evaluation forms from staff professional development opportunities
 - DCPS will work to standardize these evaluations to capture what teachers and staff are taking away from the professional development sessions.

DCPS will collect baseline data in 2011 for use in future evaluations. The OSSE will also monitor the status of LWP's in DCPS and the charter schools through the School Health Profiles and while conducting reviews and site visits.